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EASTERN DEPARTMENT

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GENERAL

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FROM ~~W~~ of Balfour Paul
Reprint to Mr.
A. L. Goodison
No. 1071/46/64
Dated Aug 29

Received Sept 7

(Outward Action)

SUBJECT: Lebanese delegation to Arab summit: Ambassador called on Amman & urged restraint on summit topics on terms for Jordan: South Arabia & Oman; and Jordan was American Ambassador also contacted members of delegation. Helou's talk with Ambassador on summit and other matters

Encloses Copy of:

References and Relevant Papers:

EJ 1195/58 ^{Sept 3/8}

EJ 1195/59

BM 1041/262.

MINUTES

Mr. McLean (paras. 3(c) & 5) ^{8/8}
NEAT ^{Aug 29/9}

Walim Sept 1.20/4

(Printing Instructions)

(Referred to Legal Adviser)

(Action completed)

(Main Indexed)

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BRITISH EMBASSY,

BEIRUT.

August 29, 1964

Dear Alan,

As reported in our telegram No. 563 about arms for Jordan it was generally believed that President Chehab and his successor elect would attend the Alexandria Summit meeting. On August 26, however, it was announced that Chehab would not after all be going and that he had appointed Helou to lead the Lebanese delegation since the execution of Summit decisions would be his responsibility. He doubtless had other unexpressed reasons for not going, but there has been little criticism of his decision here where the principle of "The King is (nearly) dead: long live the King" is in full swing.

2. The rest of the delegation is to consist of:-

Hussein Oweini (Prime Minister)
Fouad Ammoun (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Col. Yousef Chemalet (Chief of Staff)
Joseph Abou Khater (Ambassador in Cairo)
Halim Abou Izzeddine (Director, Political Department)
Elias Sarkis (Director General of the President's Office)
Fouad Bizri (Director General, Hydro-electric Section,
Ministry of Works)

and a number of camp-followers. The absence of Harfouche, the Secretary General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who has hurt his leg, is a pity as the rest are not from our point of view a muscular or helpful team. Ammoun and others leave today for the preparatory meeting of Foreign Ministers.

3. The Ambassador called on Ammoun on August 25 and urged restraint on a number of the Summit topics:

- (a) Arms for Jordan (Foreign Office telegram No. 785). Ammoun took the point about Soviet penetration and agreed that confrontation between America and Russia on Arab territory would be bad for the Arabs; but though he was emphatic that the Lebanon would not buy arms from Russia, he seemed unconcerned about other Arabs doing so.
- (b) South Arabia and Oman: Ammoun was unhelpful, favoured immediate independence everywhere and, though agreeing that Lebanon's policy was always one of moderation, declared that on this issue there was a strong and almost unanimous current with which the Lebanon would as usual go along.

/(c) Jordan Waters:

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- This is the Johnston Plan.*
- (c) Jordan Waters: Ammoun made a great point of insisting that Jordan water should be used in the Jordan valley, which meant that the inhabitants of the Hasbani valley should have all they wanted of the Hasbani and the rest of it could then go down into the Jordan. (There is at least no more talk here of diverting the Hasbani into the sea). Asked whether anything had yet been done, whether it was proposed to publish anything or take the Diplomatic Corps on a tour, he replied in the negative to all three questions.

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4. On August 27 I took Abou Izzeddine a copy of the text of Foreign Office telegram No. 422, Saving to Cairo, on South Arabia (which he promised would be "carefully studied" by the delegation) and went through the same points as those above, with much the same response.

5. Meanwhile the American Ambassador has been working on President Chehab, on Philippe Takla (who is still influential) and on Charles Helou. According to Meyer, Chehab's reactions were disappointing but he had been somewhat encouraged by those of Takla and Helou. The latter thought it would be helpful if it could be conclusively shown that Israel would only take the quantities of water allocated under the Johnston Plan; but in general he said frankly that it was Nasser who would be calling all the tunes and that it was in Cairo that the Americans would be well advised to concentrate their representations.

Sir D. Riches, I think

6. The Ambassador has just returned from a general talk with Helou, in the course of which he said that he hoped that the general result of the Alexandria Summit would be peace rather than war. In particular he hoped that it would not mean encouragement to Egypt to continue or augment the troubles she was creating in South Arabia; and, secondly, that any military arrangements that were decided upon would not be an invitation to pressure on the Americans to supply Israel with matching arms. He also touched on the dangers of polarisation of supply to the Arabs and Israelis respectively. Helou said that he personally was in a difficult position over the Summit because he was not yet in fact President, he was not really familiar with the detail of particular matters, and he would have to simultaneously prove himself as a good Arab and non-confessional Lebanese while living down any resentment there might be at Chehab's non-appearance. Though of course she would never take the lead in Arab actions, the Lebanon could equally not afford to bring up the rear. Her position would essentially be median as well as moderate. As regards South Arabia, he sincerely hoped that there would not be more trouble. As regards the armaments race he thought - though he emphasised this was only his preliminary and personal idea - that measures to strengthen armaments, even if they meant the possibility of an arms race, were preferable from the Lebanon's point of view, to the initiation of works diverting the Jordan waters before adequate protection against a possible Israeli reaction was assured. It is obvious from this /that

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that Helou thinks that it is the lesser evil for the Lebanon to go along with the strengthening of Arab armed forces than to be accused of dragging her feet over diversion. The Ambassador has commented that though Helou showed - perhaps understandably - excessive regard for his personal position and unwillingness to take any real firm line, he was cheered by his insistence that he would be consulting Takla intensively before his departure for Alexandria and intended to rely on Takla's advice, whether officially or unofficially, after his inauguration.

7. I am sending copies of this letter to the Chanceries at Amman, Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Kuwait, Jedda, Tel Aviv and Washington.

Yours ever
H. G. Balfour Paul
(H. G. BALFOUR PAUL)

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